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SUBJECT: HUMAN RIGHTS DISCUSSIONS WITH MEXICO AT COMMUNITY
OF DEMOCRACIES LISBON MINISTERIAL

Classified By: DRL A/S Karen B. Stewart, Acting, Reasons 1.4 (b) & (d)

¶1. (U) DRL Acting Assistant Secretary Karen B. Stewart met with Mexican Undersecretary for Multilateral Affairs and Human Rights Juan Manuel Gomez-Robledo July 11 on the sidelines of the Lisbon Community of Democracies (CD) Ministerial to discuss human rights and democracy priorities. This was Gomez-Robledo's first time at a CD Ministerial; he came on the advice of the Mexican Embassy in Washington that the Obama Administration continues to support the CD, but the GOM remains critical of the way it is run. Gomez-Robledo observed that the CD is perceived to be too close to the USG, suggesting that the Convening Group rotate locations; the closed nature of the Convening Group's leadership has shut out potential allies; the declarations fail to add much to the political discourse; and the GOM abhors the invitation process, preferring inclusiveness. Instead, Gomez-Robledo would like to see the CD interact more in other international fora, such as IDEA, and saw the roundtables as useful for fostering open debate owned by all CD participants and observers. AA/S Stewart expressed the USG goal to move away from the perception of the CD as "our baby and our responsibility," and hinted at internal debates over inclusiveness and the risk of becoming so inclusive as to lose the meaning in the name of the organization. AA/S Stewart encouraged Mexico to speak with Lithuania regarding ideas for the future of the CD, including the possibility of moving Convening Group locations.

¶2. (U) Mexico will host the next U.S.-Canada-Mexico human rights trilateral consultation September 10. The full day consultations will focus primarily upon the Human Rights Council (HRC), as the USG is a new member. Mexico's new ambassador to Geneva is an expert on human rights and was involved in the former Commission - Juan Jose Gomez Camacho. France and Mexico plan to host a reflection session on HRC reform at the end of October, to which the USG will be invited among 15 other countries - civil society and High Commissioner Pillay will also be invited to participate. Mexico has developed a concept paper on the 2011 HRC review to guide discussions, with the goal of developing a report to the UN General Assembly to contribute to the 2011 review. (Note: On August 19, provided the list of invitees and a copy of the concept paper, after consulting with France: the United States, Switzerland, the United Kingdom, France, Romania, Ukraine, Mexico, Brazil, Costa Rica, Republic of Korea, India, Jordan, Morocco, Nigeria, and Ghana. End Note.)

¶3. (SBU) With regard to defamation of religions, Mexico had a bilateral consultation with Pakistan; GOM noted dislike of the resolution and intent to continue abstaining. Mexico

advised USG reach out to Pakistan, as Gomez-Robledo believed the GOP seemed to get the message. In terms of the GRULAC, he advised outreach to Brazil as key to bringing along others. (Note: In an aside, Gomez-Robledo cautioned that Brazil's ambitions for the UN Security Council are leading to inconsistent policies, siding with the "bad guys," and expressed amazement at Brazil's negative behavior at the HRC special session on Sri Lanka. End Note.) Gomez-Robledo has bilateral discussions with Brazil at the end of July, and plans to be "very frank" with them. The Holy See should be encouraged to be more active. AA/S Stewart expressed thanks for Mexican efforts on the Russian "traditional values" resolution, and warned that the delayed resolution may resurface at the September HRC session. Gomez-Robledo took this under advisement for his bilaterals with Russia, also scheduled for the end of July, and noted France's intention to do more work on sexual orientation, using the same approach they used on death penalty to garner gradual support for stronger protections.

¶4. (U) AA/S Stewart referenced trouble in the ECOSOC NGO Committee over consultative status applications for Democracy Coalition Project and the Dynamic Christian World Mission Foundation. Gomez-Robledo noted that NGO Committee obstruction of consultative status for civil society organizations is not unique to U.S. NGOs, remembering the experience of Egypt blocking International IDEA's status for three years before it became an international organization. (Note: Mexico is to host a meeting November 2009 for IDEA - the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance. End Note.) Mexican NGOs are becoming increasingly internationally active, and more in future may seek consultative status at the UN - this could become a problem for Mexico as well. Mexico has been considering joining the ECOSOC NGO Committee; Gomez-Robledo may push harder for a firm commitment from the SRE.

¶5. (C) Given the negotiations on the CD Honduras statement, Gomez-Robledo noted his concern with the lack of progress to Arias' mediation efforts, but nonetheless finds it needful as a path to peace vice Venezuela's and Nicaragua's talk of reinstating the democratic order by force. The Bolivarians are "delighted" with what has happened, now in the position to argue that any elections held without Zelaya's return will be tainted because they will be run by an "illegal" government. (Note: Gomez-Robledo assumes whoever wins the elections in Honduras will pull GOH out of ALBA. End Note.) Mexico believes they and others will soon face pressure to take the situation to the UN Security Council. Mexico maintains the argument that the region already has alternative mechanisms to address the situation, and notes that neither Russia nor China want the Honduras situation to come up in the Security Council for reasons of the Iran elections and internal domestic concerns.

¶6. (SBU) Comment: Gomez-Robledo's observations regarding the Community of Democracies and the ECOSOC NGO Committee reflect greater high level interest on the part of Mexico than has been expressed in quite some time. While still expressing considerable skepticism as to the CD's utility, this discussion presents an open door for further reflection together, particularly in light of USG review of our future policies and positions regarding the CD. On multilateral human rights priorities, ongoing USG policy review and outreach efforts may result in greater opportunities for cooperation with Mexico both within a trilateral format with Canada, and bilaterally at the UN General Assembly and the Human Rights Council in particular. With regard to the ECOSOC NGO Committee, Mexico ought to be strongly encouraged to pursue membership as one tactic in addressing the access problems for civil society members to the UN system. We plan to further explore these issues at the next Mexico-Canada-United States human rights trilateral consultations in September. End Comment.

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